1: Hocart Y-5 (ca. 1920) 1929 OQ6 Lau OQ6
Lakemba

The fish presently come forth to escape the poison, but being already intoxicated they move slowly. Thus they are easily speared.

Men sometimes go out with torches at low tide and hack the fish they find sleeping in the shallow waters. It is believed that a shark missed by a spear cannot be caught as he grows angry and his body becomes so hard that the spear rebounds no matter how sharp it be.

Crab Hunting

The land crab (*lairo*) is very common. It is caught and eaten whenever found, but at one time of the year it is hunted and drawn out of the holes. The crabs found in the village are not eaten because they feed on rubbish.

The coconut crab is common about Tarukua. Prawns are caught with nets by the women.

Bagging Palolo

The palolo (*mbalolo*) is a worm that lives in the sea but makes its appearance usually only once a year, sometimes twice a year, in November or December before dawn. When it does appear it swarms in such quantities in the passages that it can be scooped out with tins and mugs. This lasts an hour or so, then they disappear.

The following is compiled from information received from several individuals:

In Lakemba the coming of the palolo is confined to the passages off Tumbou. It is also bagged in Naiau and some of the Southern Islands.

In olden days people knew the time of swarming by watching the sun: if it set half way up the hill of Vanua Vatu it was the time for bagging palolo. A few palolo appear the morning before the great day, and are called "the head of the palolo." It used to be the duty of Katumbalevu proper to go and watch for it. When they had caught some they brought it to the Tui Naiau, who then had it proclaimed in the village, "The head of the palolo is drifting." Then they all prepared nets like tennis rackets.

The night of the palolo there is always a squall known as the procrastinator of the palolo because the foolish think it will be cold out fishing, and so lie down and sleep; but the wise sit up and when they go out before the dawn the sky is clear, without a single black cloud. They go out in crowds and set to work as soon as the palolo begins to swarm, for there is no time to lose. As soon as the sun rises the swarm dissolves. The people go home and immediately make an oven. Till that time the weather has remained fine, but the moment the oven is buried clouds gather and it pours. This rain is called "the extinguisher of the embers." As soon as the oven is cooked they carry some off to the country villages; each man goes to his kinsmen in the country.

"It is the feast that we make for the country folk."

In return the country folk make a feast to take to those who bring the palolo; they make the feast in good style, using their biggest taro; this is the only occasion that will draw from the Yandrana people the large taro which they call Won't-go-to-Tumbou, because they never send it in feasts to Tumbou.

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226 **Thina.** *Thina* is the Lauan word for lamp, lantern, torch. Men or women or men and women torch fish (*thina*) together at night. Each takes at least one coconut spathe, splits one end of it several times, so that it will catch fire readily and quickly throw a light flame. At the spot on the beach where the fishing is to start, the spathes are lighted with a glowing coconut husk or stick. The torches are held over the water by members of the party who walk slowly ahead of the others. The fish are usually speared or clubbed.

Vaka a samu (the beating fashion). A fish, tied to a short line which is fastened to a stick, is beaten on the water to serve as a lure. The fish are stabbed with a one-pronged spear (*sakathukathu*), which is a sharp pointed shaft of wood.

Tauyara. By the *tauyara* (to lure with an equal) method, a fish is stuck onto one prong of a spear or tied to the shaft, with a string. The spear is moved so that the bait is kept under water to lure a fish close enough to be stabbed.

FISHING WITH HOOK AND LINE

Fishing with hook and line is called *siva*. This method is used frequently on Namuka, Mothe, and Fulanga by men and women either during the day or night, preferably at sandy spots where the hook will not catch. A small fish, a crab, or a slug is bait.

For fishing from the beach a line 50 meters long is used. The loosely rolled coil is thrown by one hand and an end of line held in the other. At intervals the fisherman calls: "Tale mai, tale mai, tale mai" (Come here, come here, come here). In canoe trolling the method is the same, but a shorter line is used. Sometimes the canoe is anchored and the line is weighted. When fishing from a rock the man or woman throws the line out or weights it with a stone so that it sinks vertically.

The fishhook used in Lau today is imported. The natives agree that the fishhooks formerly used were of wood and bone but no one was able to describe them.

FISH STUPIFYING

226 278 **Samulaki.** The afternoon before *samulaki* fishing on Kambara a few people go to the bush to gather a vine called *tuvu*. Old branches are taken because their poison is strong. In the evening the branches are beaten with a rock until the juice begins to ooze. Before sunrise the next morning, and at low tide when the fish have not yet left the coral formations, women go to the reef. A small handful of the beaten twigs is tied into a bundle and splashed on the water so that the poisonous juice mixes with the water and enters the coral caves. Several coral formations are poisoned on the same morning, and by daybreak the fish are drifting unconscious on the surface. Any prevented by the coral from coming to the surface are speared.

A similar method, called *tuvu*, is used on Fulanga. The bark of the *tutu* is cut into pieces and pounded on a stone with a beating stick. Then the bark is ripped into strips, which are tied in small bundles and taken by canoe to the reef. The girls dive around the coral formations and, if many fish are detected, the basket containing the bundles is lowered into the water. The wet bark is beaten again so that the sap oozes readily. Each girl takes a bundle, dives, places it between the rocks until all the main holes and narrow passages contain the poison. The fish which rise to the surface are picked by hand or speared. On Fulanga this method of fish stupifying is usually used by a household, sometimes by a village.

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Tuva ni nikini. On Kambara the roots of the *tuva ni nikini* (New Guinea *tuva*) are taken by men, women, or children to the reef. The people dive near the reef to chase the fish into the cavities of the coral formation. Then someone, usually a girl but never a man, puts on protecting glasses, dives, and circles the rock to see whether or not the fish have fled into the holes. After the root is beaten into dust with a piece of hard wood about 30 to 40 cm. long and 5 to 7 cm. in diameter, women dive with handfuls of the powder and squeeze them under water. After about 15 minutes the fish come to the surface, apparently dead or stupified, but most fish caught this way die after about five minutes of play. Heavy, strong fish are hit on the head with a stick or with the back of a cane knife.

On Fulanga the powdered root is placed in a medicine bag made of coconut reticulum and taken to the reef. If the fisherwomen see fish, the bag is taken into the water and squeezed between the rocks. The method is used only during the day.

Tuva kalou. On Namuka, *tuva kalou* fruit is steamed in the earth oven, then put into a basket which is placed in the hull of a canoe partly filled with water. The basket is pressed against the hull or worked with sticks so that the fruit juice mixes with the water. When three or four bailers of this mixture are poured around a rock formation, it sinks slowly and is worked into the caves by the current. When the drugged fish appear on the surface they are caught by hand or stabbed, then put into baskets.

Sosolo or soli. *Soli*, a black slug about 30 cm. long and 4 to 5 cm. in diameter, which is found in masses near Namuka, is used for stupifying fish. The slugs are put into a basket, covered with sand, and trampled so that the juice and the odor of the slugs are absorbed by the sand. The basket is tied to a string and let down from a canoe into the water of the lagoon. It is said that the odor and the slight change in the color of the water attract and stun the fish causing them to rise to the surface in two or three minutes. They are gathered by hand. The same basket of slugs may be used several times.

Soto. On Mothe *soto* leaves are crushed with a cane knife or shell. During the night, at low tide when the water is calm, the leaves are placed in coral holes to stun the fish.

FISH TRAPPING

Toni kana. The fish trap (*ndai ni ika*) used in the *toni kana* method, is a circular basket, up to 1 fathom in diameter and up to 40 cm. deep. The fish enter a funnel-shaped entrance on top. Usually the trap is set by a diver who preferably puts it onto a smooth place. A sea slug or a large crab, which has been opened to cause a stronger odor, serves as bait and is tied with a string either to the trap or to stone weights inside the trap. Occasionally the trap is hooked to a stick, tied onto the end of a string and weighted with a stone. It is lowered and raised by the hook and string.

Va katu ku tuku. From the circumference of the round trap described above are run three strings, which are tied together from 0.5 to 1 meter above the stone-weighted trap. At the upper end of the string is tied a floating stick 1 to 2 meters long so that the trap can easily be located and pulled out of the water.

Lasia. A diver places the above described trap and puts stones around it which touch the lower edge of the trap so that the current cannot move it easily. This kind of trap setting is done most frequently in calm waters.

FISHPONDS

Of the six islands visited fishponds were used only on Mothe. This island has six fishponds which resemble horseshoes in shape, the open end bordered by the beach. The stone walls (*moka*), which are about 0.5 meter high, are made from the black basalt with which the beach is strewn. This stone is smooth and heavy, and the walls are not easily destroyed by the surf. High tide brings the fish over the walls, where they are speared or gathered.

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has died. A shallow hole in the sand is dug by hand, with a stick, or with a large shell. Usually nuts are transplanted at sunset. Natives say that if the planter carries someone, preferably a young boy, on his back while planting, the tree will bear more fruit. Trees on the leeward side of the island are sturdier than those on the windward side. The best harvests are gathered from trees between 10 and 60 years of age.

Good qualities in a coconut are considered by Lauans to be a thin husk and a thin shell to admit the sun, which sweetens milk and growing meat.

Ono has the reputation for having the best flavored coconuts, Lakemba for the greatest quantity of nuts. The soil of Kambara is a little too sandy for coconuts. The trees growing on Ndelaioloi are said to bring forth the largest number and the best fruit on the island. Mothe has many coconuts. On Fulanga and Ongea the trees are small and do not bear so well as on the other islands. Namuka has large groves, but many trees are unhealthy.

There are several coconut pests. *Mate ni niu* (coconut death) is caused by the purple moth (*Levuana iridescens*) and is greatly feared. The branches of the tree turn rust brown or black, drop, and the tree dies. In recent years the colonial government has sent an insect-eating fly (*Ptychomyia remota*) imported from the Malay States, to the infected islands and the pest is rapidly retreating. Coconut crabs, of which there are many on Wangava, break the nuts on the ground and eat them or leave them to spoil. On Komo, a rat is said to climb the tree and "eat" the young nuts. Some coconut trees are killed by a fern which grows in the branch fork.

Every part of the coconut tree is used. Coconut oil is indispensable. Copra is still used in limited quantities in exchange for western trade goods, especially tobacco, kerosene, and cloth. The meat is an important food for human beings, pigs, and chickens. It is the first food given to a baby. The milk is drunk and used in preparing fish and greens. The husk is used for sennit and kindling, the wood is used for fuel and is split into roof laths, the leaves are used for baskets, and the midribs of the leaflets for brooms. Whole leaves are made into mats for house walls, floor mats, and thatch. The root is used as medicine and the reticulum serves as a medicine bag. The spathes make the best torches. The branches are used in fishing, and the elastic thick middle rib, freed of its foliage, is used as a lash.

The harvest of nuts for copra is picked off the ground by women. Several nuts are carried on one arm pressed against the body and one nut is carried in the free hand of the other arm. They are placed in a row on the path or thrown into an enclosure fenced with vertically placed sticks. The nuts are split by kneeling women, the meat poked out with a stick, shell, or cane knife and put into baskets. It is then placed on boards, usually on the beach outside the grove, to dry.

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755 about the spirit, gives him potions of herbs to drink, and
753 rubs his body with medicines. Finally in the course of the treatment, when the doctor touches the part of the body in which the spirit dwells, the patient will cry out. The doctor presses the affected part until it hurts and asks "Who is it?" and in great distress the patient calls the name of the spirit. Immediately the spirit leaves him and he begins to recover.

The cure, however, is not always permanent. While we were on Kambara, Suma of Undu became ill. He lost his memory and his power of thought. He wandered about the village staring into space. He could not eat, sleep or work, and he had to be watched lest he cut or burn himself. People were afraid that he might set fire to a house or commit suicide. He was tortured by dreams of evil spirits who took him fishing or into the bush. Finally he went for treatment to Kama, the best witch doctor on Kambara, and lived in Kama's house for about two months.

755 The doctor gave him a medicine (called *wai ni taitchi*) twice
● 278 a day. To make this medicine, equal quantities of bark shav-
753 ings from several trees[53] are placed in a small medicine bag, made of coconut reticulum tied with a strip of pandanus, and steeped in a cup of cold water. The bag is squeezed and removed. The infusion is drunk and the bag is rubbed over the body. After the fourth day the doctor gave him another medicine (called *wai ni thavuyalo*) internally and externally twice a day for two weeks. The purpose of this dose was to clear the mind. During this time the patient began to eat again but he continued to be troubled by a spirit which brought him food in his dreams. The doctor gave him a medicine (called *ƙanaimbulu*) to stop the dreams and prevent the food from poisoning the man.[54] The infusion was drunk three times a day. As the patient's condition improved he was

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[53] i.e., *vesivesiwai* (*Pongamia pinnata*), *ƙura* (*Morinda citrifolia*), *uthi* (*Evodia hortensis*), *vevendu* (*Scaevola*) and lemon.

[54] To make *ƙanaimbulu*, place a few Tahitian chestnut leaves in a medicine bag and steep the bag in a cup of water.

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given a purge (called *pala*), before eating.[55] To increase the patient's strength and weight he was given a fattening medicine (called *pala fatafata*)[56] before meals and other medicines.[57]

Only one type of medicine was given a day. The doctor spent much time talking with the patient and trying to soothe him. Every day he gave him a massage, starting with the eyes and moving over the head and body. Finally, one day during this massage when the doctor pressed the patient's genitals the patient cried out: "The windwomen!" As soon as he confessed, the evil spirits which had been lodging in his genitals flew away and the patient began to recover. His progress was rapid and in a week or two he was ready to return to Undu.

The purification ceremony, which marks the recovery of a patient after treatment by a doctor, was held in Kama's house. Suma bathed in the sea for the first time since he had been under the doctor's care, and his near male relatives presented mats, barkcloth, oil, and kava root to the doctor in payment for his services.

The patient returned to Undu apparently cured, but after a few weeks the symptoms began to recur. He grew steadily worse, but did not return to the doctor. One night he called a few of his male relatives and confessed that he had stolen money from the mission church on Kambara. He died shortly afterwards.

Another case of spirit possession treated by Kama was that of Noka of Tokalau. The patient was about forty years old at the time. He dreamed that the "windwomen" brought

[55] The purge was made from the bark of the *tatangia* (*Acacia laurifolia*) plant, shaved into a medicine bag and steeped in water.

[56] The fattening medicine was made of equal quantities of the bark of the *kavika* (*Eugenia malaccensis*) and the *weleanggio* (*Torenna sambucian*) plants prepared in the same fashion.

[57] The patient was also given medicine called *wai ni thange*, made of the roots of the pandanus tree and the Tahitian chestnut shaved and steeped; and also medicine (called *awanga*) made of the bark of the *vuandromo* and *yaka* (? *Pueraria thunbergiana*) trees prepared in the same way.

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754 (*ndraunikau*). Sorcery is not so common in Lau as in some other parts of Fiji. The sorcerer secures some of his victim's "dirt"—a lock of hair or a piece of his *lavalava*—and places it in the pointed end of a young, empty coconut shell. The shell is buried in the ground with the pointed end toward the victim's house. The victim then sickens and often dies in a very short time.

754 The illness of Tchiope, an old man of Tokalau, was thought 757 to have been caused by sorcery. Tchiope was suffering from 278 paralysis of one side of the body. The doctor gave him medicine against sorcery (called *ravulevu*). It is taken twice [824] a day before meals. The bark and green leaves of a tree, called *ravulevu* (*Symplocos spicata*), are ground on a stone and wrapped in a small bag of white barkcloth. The bag is steeped and squeezed in cold water and the infusion is drunk. Bark shavings from the same tree, mixed with a little coconut oil, are then rubbed over the body. The patient, however, failed gradually and died.

753 According to informants the smell of a dead body (called *tangaloa*)[60] may cause three kinds of illness; leprosy, external sores with a bad smell, and internal sores. To protect the [764] mourners against this illness a corpse is usually buried within three hours of death.

As has been pointed out, illness in Lau may also be caused by the infraction of a tabu. Not all sickness, however, is attributed to superhuman agents. Normal labor pains and ailments like rheumatism, boils, and misplaced uterus are believed to be due to natural causes and are treated with natural rather than supernatural methods—by means of herbs internally and externally administered, by massage, manipulation and diet.

757 Boils are considered the most common sickness. Kama 278

[60] Informants know of no deity called *tangaloa* like that of neighboring parts of [171] Polynesia. I found no other meaning for the word.

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treats boils with a special medicine (called *lolotambakau*).[61] The treatment brings the boil to a head. When it breaks it is pressed and washed with fresh hot water and the medicine is applied again. Before and after treatment the doctor washes his hands in cold water, then rubs them with special crushed leaves (*thombona*) and washes them again. Boils are lanced with a shell which has been cleaned with a glowing brand. The shell is not sharpened and is discarded after the operation.

Formerly surgery was practiced more frequently than it is today. An inflated belly was cut open with a bamboo knife sharpened by breaking off the edge. No method of binding together the edges of the incision was known, but medicines were used to aid the healing process.[62]

To induce pregnancy, Wondo, a woman of Undu, puts scrapings of bark of the *sikethi* and *vauvau* (*Hibiscus*) into a medicine bag, soaks the bag in water and squeezes it. The potion is drunk by the patient twice a day. If after two months the woman fails to conceive the doctor takes her into the lagoon and makes a digital examination of the woman's vagina. If displacement of the uterus is indicated the doctor attempts to correct it by manipulation. The woman and her husband are then given medicine (called *wai ni luvea*) to drink. The recipe, made from the bark of a tree, is a secret handed down from mother to daughter.

The native Lauan theory of disease with its emphasis on superhuman causes and cures is directly opposed to that underlying modern medicine. There is probably medicinal value in some of the herbs used, but this problem has not been investigated. The measure of success which the witch doctor attains lies to a great extent in his influence on the mind of the patient. Moreover, the native system of medicine is deeply

[61] The leaves of the *uthi* (*Evodia hortensis*) tree, crushed between the palms of the hands, are placed in a bag made of oiled white barkcloth. This is taken to the patient and the leaves are removed from the bag and rubbed on the affected area.

[62] One of these was the fruit of the *sikethi* (*Aleurites moluccana*) tree. After the skin of the fruit had been removed it was roasted in the fire, cooled, and rubbed on the wound.